*Die Sabbathi* 19. *Junij* 1647.

THe Lords and Commons in Parliament having well accepted the obedience and readineſſe of thoſe Officers and Souldiers who have complied with their Orders, have Ordered and Ordained, and by authority aforeſaid doe Order and Ordain, That all and every the ſaid Officers and Souldiers aforeſaid, ſhall be freed, exonerated, acquitted and diſcharged, and are in and hereby declared and adjudged from henceforth to be free, exonerate, acquit, and diſcharged of and from all and whatſoever proſecution, judgement of life or member, pains, penalties, and puniſhments whatſoever incurred, or that ſhall, may, or can, might, could, ſhould, or ought to be inflicted, proſecuted, had, or purſued againſt them or any of them, for or by reaſon of the ſaid pretended offence or offences of their departure from their ſaid Colours, or from under the command of the ſaid Sir *Thomas Fairfax*, or from or under the command of any Military Officer or Officers under him whatſoever.

Die Sabbathi 19. Junij 1647.

*ORdered by the Lords aſſembled in Parliament, That this Ordinance be forthwith printed and publiſhed.*

*Joh. Brown Cler. Parliamentorum.*

# A VINDICATION OF A Hundred Sixty seven Commission OFFICERS That are come off from the ARMY, in obedience to the PARLIAMENTS Orders,

*Published according to Order.*

LONDON, Printed for *Andrew Kemb.* July 1. 1647.

# *A Vindication of a hundred sixty seven Officers in Commission that are come off from the Army, in obedience to the Parliaments Orders.*

WE are very sensible, that the misunderstandings between the Parliament and their Army, desire rather expediencies of mitigation, then any courses to exasperate them: and are as conscious of the integrity of our intentions in our late accounts directed solely to that end, which we thought had fully appeared by our late papers and expressions at the severall meetings at *Saffron Walden*, and likewise by our late petition to the Generall, and yet we finde our selves miserably invironed with prejudice, most injuriously misreported, and unconscionably traduced to have practised the disadvantage of our souldiers, and the dishonour of the whole Army, and these calumnies so inculcated by private sollicitatours, that many sober and well deserving souldiers, have been led to mistrust their fidelity and affection of their long approved officers. And although we secure in the conscience of our own integrity, had resolved silently to have expected a happy issue of the present transactions in the Army, yet called upon by the increase of these reiterated slanders (besides many other provocations) And likewise considering how much it concerneth us to preserve our good esteem, with honourable and honest men, were at last induced to publish this our ampler explanation of the whole course of our behaviour in the businesses now in difference amongst us; which we are resolved, by the help of God, to mannage with that Christian modestie and cleerenesse, that none shall receive just provocation thereby.

To begin then with our first meeting at *Saffron Walden*, when Sr *William Waller*, Sr *John Clotworthy*, and Mr *Salway* came as Commissioners from the Parliament about the Irish affairs: For then the officers of the Army began to have intelligence one of the others judgement, touching these matters, now in debate. Though we were not at that time prepared to give a positive resolution for our personall engagement, nor were sufficiently informed of our souldiers inclination, yet we thought it most suitable, with our bounden duty and respect to the Parliament, and most advantagious

advantagious to the Irish service freely and readily to expresse our resolution to improve to the utmost, our interest with the officers and souldiers under our respective Commands, to promote that imployment; modestly representing such things as we thought most apt to induce the Army to ready imbracement of that service, relying on the Parliaments wisedome and care herein, which we looked upon as an obligatory inducement to them, to satisfie the Army in those necessary desires, we then insisted on, rather then by capitulating with them, to discover our distrust of their care therein, which might in our apprehensions have produced very ill consequences: and these were the reasons we dissented from the major part of the officers then present. For the petition which at this meeting first discovered it self (for we undertake not to track it to its fountain,) it bearing the name of the whole Army, and being of generall concernment to all, ought in our judgements to have undergon the debate of a free and generall Councell of Warre, or to have had the visible countenance of the Generall, or some other superiour officer, and being of that high concernment to the Army and kingdome, not been exposed to subscription by some privates, before we could be acquainted with the authours or grounds of it, or any intrusted by us admitted to debate the nature, matter, form or consequence thereof, besides we did abundantly labour in the want of a President of such a petition from officers and souldiers of a well regulated Army; nor were there at this time any generall discontents awakened amongst the souldiers, for if there were any, they were as yet confined to some particular regiments, no considerable part of the Army being involv'd therein: which was greatly feared might thereby be dilated, and such jealousies and distempers raised as might not easily be allaid: we would be understood to alleage these as motives, our reason dictated to us to forbear the subscription hereof our selves and to hinder it according to our interest amongst the souldiers, not that we do in the least, charge the first contrivers or any who have had any hand in this petition with any designe in promoting thereof, it being our aim thorowout this paper, to vindicate our selves, not censure the actions of others: And we much wonder how we should hereby lye under so hard construction, as to be rated the betrayers of our souldiers, or the furtherers of some strange designe for practising according to our reason; especially from such who make it their maxime to desire and give the like liberty to all of acting according to their judgements.

For the next generall meeting of officers at *Walden*, when my Lord of *Warwick* came down, we have nothing to offer, but our admiration, that ſo innocent an undertaking at the invitation of the Parliament by the approbation of the Generall, for the relief of our bleeding brethren in their greateſt exigencie, ſhould meet with ſuch impetuous obſtructions and uncharitable interpretations as it hath done, and we wonder how the deſigne of breaking the Army ſhould hereupon be laid upon our ſhoulders, when the Parliament had before declared their reſolution not to continue all the Army here in *England*, the publique enemy being reduced: Nor can we underſtand how any part of it could be better imployed in the defence of this Kingdome, then by the reducement of that, nor did we reaſonably imagine to have found any conſiderable impediments herein, the deſpondency of the officers at this time appearing to us to have proceeded for want of ſatisfaction in Major Generall *Skippons* reſolution for the undertaking of that ſervice, for ingaging the ſouldiers, we found many at that time very willing to embrace that work, only expecting reaſonable ſatisfaction for their paſt ſervices here; nor did we ever finde any propenſions in the Parliament, to force to any ſervice, reſolving as farre as we could apprehend, only to take ſuch whoſe condition and inclination fitted them thereto, ſo that none could be injured by his own conſent.

Upon further emergency there is another meeting of Officers, indited by Field Marſhall *Skippon*, &c. at *Saffron Walden*, for the quieting of diſtempers; at this firſt meeting, we were enjoyned to repair to our ſeverall charges, and to publiſh the Votes of the Houſe, and take an Account of what unquietneſſe or diſtemper we found amongſt them, and to make a cleer report thereof at our return, to thoſe Gentlemen ſent from the Parliament: we accordingly returning, with a reſolution either to preſent the temper we found them in, to the Commiſſioners of the Parliament by our own hands, or to joyn in repreſenting any thing which might be of generall concernment to the Army: we found certain Gentlemen intruſted, without our privity or any authority from the Commiſſioners, in drawing up certain heads of grievances, which the next day we underſtood by Coll. *Lambert*, were to be preſented as the generall ſence of the Armie; they were indeed publikely read, but as any feared to make objections to them, ſo they were peremptorily required, either to agree unto them in that form they were preſented, or depart the Church where we were aſſembled by Field Marſhall *Skippon*,

pon, &c. his command: we judge it very hard to be implicated, with others, in a matter of that weight, without any further means to satisfie our selves, those Gent. entrusted being not any way interessed in us: and we easily discerning something more was meant, then was for the present discovered, they then disclaiming all other demands not concerning them as souldiers, we were constrained, though with great reluctancy, to dissent, and did accordingly deliver the Field Marshall this ensuing paper.

*To the Honourable Field Marshall* Skippon, *&c.*

WHereas Coll, *Lambert* affirmed yesterday before you (as we understood him) that himself and some other Officers had in their hands severall returns and answers, made and sent by severall Regiments upon the communicating the Votes of Parliament unto them according to your commands, and that he with the other Officers, intended to gather the generall sence out of those severall returns, that the same might be presented to you as the common sence of the Armie,

We humbly desire, That all such returns of grievances, distempers, or other matter sent by any Regiment, Troop or Company, may be exhibited before you and attested, and that such Officers as have received those returns, may shew what warrant they had to take them into their hands, or vary in any thing from the full sence of those that made and sent them; which request we hold our selves obliged to make, both in relation to the Armie in generall as members thereof, and in particular to the Regiments, Troops and Companies under our respective commands, to the end you may be better informed of the true temper of the Armie in all its parts, which we conceive will be a way most agreeable, satisfactory and usefull, in reference to your commands, the service of the Parliament, and the discharge of our own duties. And in a businesse of this nature, we humbly conceive, the sence of the Armie ought not to be declared by plurality of Votes, nor any part or member of the same, involved by the judgement of others. *May* 16. 1647.

The next day we found no further expedient to satisfie our selves, being imperiously still demanded either to joyn with them, or to be comprehended in the plurality of voices, though the field Marshall, as we understood him, at the conclusion of that meeting, affirmed, it could not passe as the generall sence of the Armie, many dissenting; to justifie our dissenting, delivered this ensuing paper.

*To the Honourable Field Marshall* Skippon, *Lieutenant Generall* Cromwell, *Commissary Generall* Ireton, *and Collonell* Fleetwood.

*The humble expressions of divers Officers in the Army.*

BEing sensible from the behaviour and expressions of many at these our last meetings, that we lie under a very hard construction, as if we had not made a cleer and faithfull report of the temper of our souldiers, and likewise for not joyning in the same method with others, in representing to your Honours the sence of the Armie, thereby rendring us not only lesse sollicitous for the souldiers satisfaction, but also promoters of dissention,

We doe in all faithfullnesse declare; That we did not dissent out of any singularity or sinister ends, but meerly in the discharge of our duty, in bringing before you those Grievances that lay upon the souldiers, as we received from their hands, much lesse out of any remisnesse to improve our endeavours to the uttermost for the souldiers satisfaction, knowing, that we are highly concerned both in honour and honesty, to doe what in us lies for the obtaining their just desires, who have faithfully cooperated with us in the Kingdoms service: And although we desire not to be concluded in their sence, from whom in some particulars we have dissented, yet we doe with all willingnesse agree with those, who have expressed their readinesse to lay down Arms at the Parliaments commands, not doubting but they in their wisedoms will so Answer their just desires in point of Arrears (as they have already in the matter of Indempnitie) that they may return with chearfullnesse to their aboads and dwellings, or be encouraged to a farther ingagement in their service. *May* 17. 1647.

In what succeeded this meeting, we must acknowledge our selves greatly astonished, especially considering the conversation and profession of the sticklers herein; for whilst we expected the application of fitting expedients to represse the irregular actings of souldiers without their Officers, to the contempt of military order and discipline, which we were by our Commissions bound to observe, or some hopes to have been in a capacity of being satisfied in the true grounds and rise of their grievances and distempers, that so we might unanimously and timously have addressed our selves to honourable and legitimate waies for the removing of them. Contrary to our expectation herein, we finde them in-

inclined to be further involved in matters altogether transcending our cognizance, and how farre directed beyond the present pretences we could not foresee: We shall not mention the sedulity of those Instruments formerly conversant, both in inveigling the souldiers into these practises, and rendring those Officers whom they found disaffected to their wayes, under severall suggestions, odious; nor will we publish the subtill blandishments of those Emissaries from the Adjutators, for so now the Trustees from every Regiment begun to stile themselves at all Rendeavous and Musters (which were now frequenter then ordinary) to spread their insinuations, insomuch that they had so farre fascinated the souldiers into this confederacy, only pretending satisfaction in point of Arrears and Indempnity, *&c.* That they ingaged themselves with their lives and fortune to make good whatsoever they should undertake: And though we say we might, appositely in order to our undertaking, to discover by what degrees our souldiers were conjured into this combination; yet lest we should thereby administer fuell to further animosities, already grown to too deplorable an height amongst us, we shall wholly forbear particularizing therein.

For the consultation of the Officers at *Bury*, we could not hope either for safety or freedom, their prejudice had now so farre prevailed against us, as the subsequent event plainly will discover, the result thereof producing extraordinary and difficult determination: for now the Army embody with a resolution not to disband by Regiments as the Parliament had ordered; the Kings person seized, and the Commissioners of Parliament attending him; many Officers and souldiers, who had not agreed to their courses, most inhumanely treated and vilely reproached, some of them plundered of their Horses and Arms, others of them pursued as publike enemies in an hostile manner, for no other reason but not joyning with them; in these hard enterprises no other consideration being yet held forth to the souldiers, but satisfaction in their Arrears, and other things concerning them as souldiers. These violences avowed by no Officers, being acted upon us only by the authority of the Adjutators, some of us repaired to the Generall, though others of us who were at a remoter distance, held it not meet to expose themselves to the fury of the incensed souldiers, especially understanding, though his excellency pitied many, he could protect none.

We dare confidently from what we have prefented, submit our selves to the censure of impartiall and unbiassed men of honour and judge-

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ment, whether we can bejustly charged with countenancing a designe of levying a new warre, by expressing our readinesse to lay down our Arms in obedience to their commands that raised us, no visible enemy remaining in Arms in the Kingdom, or how our forwardnesse to perswade or ingage any part of the Army in the *Irish* service, can without vanity be interpreted intentionally in us an obstruction to the relief of that Kingdom, or how we could fore see the pertinacy of their resolution, who would not at any time ingage with us but on their own termes: (which what they would have been was unknown to us, never have been yet discovered) though the interest of our Nation in that Kingdom were ready to expire, and many thousand Brittish families, exposed not only to beggery, but the fury of their mercilesse enemies, or what designes we could have in deserting our dissenting from the Army, now to use their own phrase, we were with them to expect joyntly as well deerly earned wages and to render our selves thereby obnoxious to a powerfull and prevailing party, were we not thereunto directed by reasons of honour and conscience in obedience to the Parliament, the violation of whose authority, would make all us, who have thereby been ingaged in this Warre, justly contemptible to this and future generations: For our interest in any particular persons or parties, we acknowledge none, except our reverence of their integrity, whom we have found best affected to the interest and constituted government of this nation be esteemed such.

As for those that are said to be put over our charge in the Army, we heartily wish they may have no occasion to charge any more this Kingdome, but that we may at last arrive at the scope of Warre, a safe and well grounded peace, that justice may flow down in its naturall stream not overawed by any force, and bounded within its own limits. Which is all our designe as it is our prayer to him who is the Supream Prince and Counsellour.

*FINIS.*

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